



NEWS RELEASE

Southwest Area

For up-to-date fire information visit: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ken Palmrose 602-417-9550 Office
602-689-6223 Cell

The Risk of Wildfire is on the Rise—Restrictions Expand in Many Areas

Phoenix, ARIZ---May 22, 2006---- Red Flag warnings are once again in effect across the state of Arizona. These are days when winds increase and the temperatures remain high, fuels are dry, and humidity is low, thus increasing the chance of wildfire spread and an increased chance of dangerous fire behavior. The Long-term forecast is to remain dry and warm with fire weather conditions becoming more severe as the weather warms up later this week.

"We have been very fortunate this year on BLM-managed lands, stated Pam McAlpin, BLM Fire Management Officer. Last year on this date we already had over 120 fires and this year we have experienced less than half that number and the acres-burned is down 60%." However, fires are now occurring at all elevations in all fuel types. Dry fuels and long-term drought, coupled with the upcoming holiday weekend, is prompting campfire and smoking restrictions to now include the following beginning May 24th:

- **National Forest Lands:** All National Forests within Arizona,
- **Arizona State Trust Lands:** All Trust Lands within Arizona.
- **Arizona State Game and Fish:** All Game and Fish Wildlife Management Areas,
- **Tribal/Agency Lands:** San Carlos Apache Reservation, Fort Apache Indian Reservation, and Truxton Canyon Agency,
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service:** Kofa NWR seasonal restrictions, year-around restrictions in the Imperial, Cibola, Bill Williams River, and Havasu National Wildlife Refuges,
- **BLM:** Phoenix, Gila, Colorado River District-administered public lands (**lands administered by the Arizona Strip District will go under campfire and smoking restrictions effective May 26th**), and
- **National Park Service:** Saguaro National Park, Chiricahua National Monument.

There are several small areas closed to all public entry including the Promontory Butte area in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests as well as several small fire closures on the Tonto and Coconino NFs. "Although fire numbers are down in many areas of the state, we must not let our guard down this coming Memorial Day weekend. Conditions are becoming more critical which means any small fire could become a major wildfire in just a matter of hours," McAlpin added.

Fire conditions as well as localized closures and restrictions are subject to change. Because tribal, federal, state, and local mandates are different, there may be some differences in their restriction notices. For a more detailed explanation concerning agency restrictions, please contact the nearest land management agency office where you plan to work or play or visit websites www.azfireinfo.com, <http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/>, or call toll free 1-877-864-6985(the toll-free system is undergoing some changes and you may experience some delays).